

Queen's envoy denies plot vs. Venezuela

by Carlos Wesley

All of Ibero-America is buzzing about the toe-to-toe battle between the representative of Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth II's government in Venezuela, John G. Flynn, and Lyndon LaRouche's co-thinker, Alejandro Peña, president of the Venezuelan Labor Party (PLV) and leader of the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSIA).

The fight was joined after the PLV and the MSIA published a pamphlet at the beginning of October, documenting that Her Majesty's government, along with Wall Street and City of London bankers, were working with their local stooges to overthrow Venezuelan President Rafael Caldera before the pope's visit next February.

As soon as they got wind that the pamphlet was in the works, the British started complaining behind the scenes to officials of the Venezuelan government, apparently with scant success. Finally, after Peña's introduction to the pamphlet ran as an op-ed in Caracas's daily *El Mundo*, Flynn went public. In a letter to the editor published in the Oct. 13 *El Mundo*, he wrote: "I regularly read your newspaper and its affiliated publication, *Ultimas Noticias*, as a source of interesting and imaginative commentaries, on Venezuelan and on international matters. However, the article entitled, 'Who Wants to Overthrow Caldera, and Why?' by Alejandro Peña Esclusa, published in *El Mundo* on Oct. 4, surpasses the normal limits of journalistic imagination."

Ambassador Flynn claimed that it was not true that he had met with impeached former Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez, who lives under house arrest, nor was it true that the British had meetings with another key figure in the plot against President Caldera, former Venezuelan Col. Hugo Chávez, a member of the narco-terrorist São Paulo Forum, founded by Cuba's Fidel Castro. To claim that Britain has ever harbored colonialist ambitions against Venezuela, is nothing but "first-rate Anglophobia," wrote Flynn.

"Under other circumstances, I would recommend the article as a possible basis for a soap opera. However, the article is damaging to my reputation, and to that of my country, and this I cannot permit occur without raising my protest," concluded Flynn, who signed himself the "Ambassador of Her British Majesty."

Peña's response appeared in the Oct. 18 issues of *El Mundo* and *Ultimas Noticias*. "You claim that you have not seen Carlos Andrés Pérez since 1993," Peña wrote Flynn.

But, on July 31, *El Nacional* reported that Flynn did visit Pérez, wrote Peña. "I know for a fact that in early August, a journalist called you *three times* to ask you to confirm the story, but you never returned the call."

In fact, wrote Peña, British embassy official Paul Webster Hare took one of those calls and rudely refused to confirm or deny the story. "Why didn't you deny it, then?" Webster Hare was also reported by the March 12 *El Nacional* to have had lunch with Colonel Chávez. Moreover, Chávez's own MBR-200 movement issued a document in April, saying that "you had met with him," Peña wrote. "Why did you not deny those reports until now?"

Peña added: "You say that Britain has never had any 'colonialist designs' on Venezuela. I suppose that means that your country will be returning the 150,000 kilometers from the Esequibo in Guyana that you stole from us." Finally, Peña told Flynn that his remarks about *El Mundo* and *Ultimas Noticias* being "imaginative," were insulting. Unlike London's *Economist*, "which dares to call the President of Venezuela 'a cockroach,' no Venezuelan daily . . . has been sufficiently 'imaginative' to refer to Queen Elizabeth as a 'rat.' "

Dousing the fire with gasoline

Diplomatic sources in Venezuela say that Flynn's attempts to squelch the exposé about Britain's leading role in the plot against Caldera, could only have come on direct orders from Whitehall. What is certain is that by his major departure from the standard British diplomatic practice of keeping a stiff upper lip, Her Highness's envoy managed to pour gasoline on the fire. Until the controversy exploded, only a few hundred copies of the "Who Wants to Overthrow Caldera, and Why?" pamphlet had been put in circulation. But on Oct. 23, thousands of copies went out all over Venezuela, inserted as a supplement in the daily *El Nuevo País*, with an additional chapter on the history of British colonialism in Venezuela.

News of the fight has now gone beyond Venezuela's borders, to as far south as Argentina, where *El Nuevo Informador* reported on it on Oct. 20, to as far north as Mexico. On Oct. 24, Mexico's premier daily *Excelsior* published a wire from the German news agency DPA, reporting on a statement "made by Democratic presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche, during a radio program, charging that Venezuelan President Rafael Caldera is allegedly 'being targeted for a coup directed from London.' " LaRouche's warning of a coup was also published on Oct. 24 by the Venezuelan dailies *Ultimas Noticias* and *El Nuevo País*.

That same day, the Caracas business daily *Reporte* published an article citing Edgar Dao, president of Venezuela's National Banking Council, denying any role in the plot. While it is true that he participated in a meeting in which the agenda was how to replace Venezuela's Constitution, said the Venezuelan banker, it was "absurd" to claim that this was a coup conspiracy.